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MANAGEMENT NEWS

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December 2, 1974
Issue #1

A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

FEB 14 '79

MANAGEMENT NEWS ESTABLISHED....This is the first issue of Management News. This Newsletter is designed to provide USDA management personnel with a concise summary of information they need to have. Management News will be issued every month. Comments and suggestions are most welcome and should be directed to Jan Bucknell, Office of Management and Finance, Extension 74678.

1975 AGRICULTURAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL....Both the House and Senate have passed this bill. Conference action is expected on Tuesday, December 3, 1974. Final action may come later in the week.

1976 USDA BUDGET....Allowances have been received for all programs except P.L. 480, Commodity Credit Corporation, and Commodity Future Trading Commission. Agencies have been notified of their allowances. Decisions have been made on 1975 and 1976 employment ceilings and we are in the process of giving these allowances to the agencies.

1975 OUTLAY REDUCTION PACKAGE....On November 20, as a part of his economic program, the President submitted a 1975 outlay reduction package which involved reductions for the food stamp, child nutrition, special export credit, agricultural conservation, water bank, forestry incentives, nutrition education, rural development grant, rural community fire protection grant programs, and Forest Service. Total outlay reductions amount to \$651 million. The package contains proposed amendments to the 1975 pending Appropriations Bill and rescissions and deferrals for the Forest Service. The Congress may not act on the President's package in the current session but hold it over for the new Congress.

OTHER RESCISSIONS AND DEFERRALS....On November 26, the House Appropriations Committee reported a budget rescission bill based on recommendations submitted by the President in September and October. In the report the Committee refused to rescind \$455 million of REA 2% direct loan authority and \$85 million authorization for the 1974 Agricultural Conservation Program. House floor action on this is expected on Tuesday, December 3.

TRAVEL REDUCTIONS....The House-Senate Conferees approved a requirement that all government travel be reduced by 10% below the amount estimated for travel in the 1975 budget for travel for the remainder of the year. Since this is almost certain to be approved by the President, agencies should plan to determine travel obligations incurred through November 30, subtract this amount from the amount estimated in the 1975 budget, and plan to reduce the difference by 10%.

INDIAN DESK ESTABLISHED....Secretary's Memorandum No. 1853, November 1, 1974, delegates responsibility for coordination of American Indian Affairs and establishment of a special task force to the Office of Equal Opportunity. This means that a single coordinating unit will now provide liaison for the entire spectrum of Indian Affairs for the Department, instead of the previous fragmented arrangements. For further information, contact Dick Peer on ext. 77327.

CSC TIGHTENS RECRUITMENT REQUIREMENTS....The CSC has imposed new requirements for recruitment from CSC examinations. Internal and external recruitment efforts must be documented when requests for candidates are made. CSC is scrutinizing all requests to assure that all merit principles are followed.

CSC REQUIRES JOB CERTIFICATION....The CSC has issued a new statement informing supervisors of their responsibility for certifying the accuracy of position descriptions. This statement informs supervisors of their statutory liability for correct classification and informs that they are subject to legal penalties for false or misleading statements.

NEW COOPERATIVE AUTHORITY....The CSC has announced a new cooperative education appointment authority which will allow Federal Agencies to bring cooperatively employed students into the competitive service without competitive examination at the completion of their education. Previously, only cooperative students in shortage category positions could be appointed in this manner.

EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT....The Office of Personnel has announced long term management training programs for the Alfred P. Sloan Fellows program at MIT (nominations due January 3); the Stanford-Sloan program (nominations due March 3); fellowships in public science policy and administration at U. of New Mexico, (nominations due February 15); the Dartmouth Executive Program, (nominations due March 1); and the Princeton mid-career program (nominations due December 20).

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT....Jack Carson, APHIS Deputy Administrator, Administrative Management, is currently engaged in a highly integrated organizational development effort to identify and define management problem areas, engage those problems through line participation in agency problem solving activities, and measure the results of both the OD tools and their solutions. The project is now in its primary data collection phase.

GOVERNMENT WIDE PRODUCTIVITY....A JFMIP sponsored seminar addressing progress and problems in Federal Government productivity programs will be held on Wednesday, December 4 in the General Accounting Office. (For further information, contact Ken Hatch at ext. 75301.)

WORD PROCESSING....A National Symposium to expand the potential of word processing was held November 25 and 26 in the Marriott Twin Bridges Motor Hotel, Washington, D.C. Speakers at the symposium included Joseph Wright (Assistant Secretary for Administration) and Henry Arnold, Management Analyst, OMF.

TWO DAY PRODUCTIVITY WORKSHOP....The Federal Government Accountants Association and the American Society of Military Comptrollers will sponsor a two day workshop in Williamsburg on December 8-10, 1974. Those interested in attending should contact Ken Hatch at ext. 75301.

EFFICIENT USE OF MICROFILM....Forest Service is now microfilming its old intra agency regulations, and plans to discard their paper records. When this task is complete, the Service plans to issue a complete set of regulations in a microfilm format. FS is also considering reissuing copies of its forms in a microfilm format, rather than on paper. Keith Bawdon, FS, ext. 74233 can provide detailed information of these projects.

FEDERAL PRODUCTIVITY PROJECT....For the past three years this Department has cooperated in a Government-wide project to measure and improve Federal productivity. Government-wide leadership is shared by OMB, GAO, CSC, GSA and the JFMIP. The Bureau of Labor Statistics analyzes input/output data and develops indicies. OMF directs and coordinates USDA participation in this project. They have provided participating agencies with case studies, inventories of capital investment projects, and have participated in numerous conferences, meetings and seminars. There are 12 USDA agencies participating in the measurement of productivity phase. Approximately 55% of the Department's work force is accounted for in more than 90 measured activities.

Calculations of Federal Government and USDA indicies for fiscal year 1973, using 1967 as the base year are:

Output Index: Government-wide - 113.9, USDA - 110.5

Input Index: Government-wide - 102.5, USDA - 100.1

Productivity Index: Government-wide - 111.1, USDA - 110.4

A chart which shows these three indicies for the Department was distributed to all agencies.

CONGRESSIONAL PLANS....Congressional leaders have set December 19 or 20 as the tentative date for the sine die adjournment of the 93rd Congress. The Senate has passed a joint resolution convening the 94th Congress at 12 o'clock noon on Tuesday, January 14, 1975.

NEW LEGISLATION....S-2299, the joint simplification action is awaiting Presidential action. The bill provides for simplifying applications for Federal assistance by State and local government and non-profit organizations. Enactment of this bill is not expected to have significant effect on USDA agencies.

USDA CENTRAL ACCOUNTING SYSTEM....A recommended conceptual design and detailed implementation plan for the central accounting system has been developed at the National Finance Center. Copies of these documents will be sent to the agencies as early as possible in December for their review and comments.

VOUCHER PAYMENT SUBSYSTEMS....Staff from the National Finance Center will be in Washington, D.C. during the week of December 9-13, 1974, to talk to agency fiscal personnel about three voucher payment subsystems to be implemented in the near future. The three subsystems will handle payments for (1) over-the-counter commercial purchases, (2) retail gasoline credit card purchases, and (3) commercial telephone service. Agencies are being notified of the meeting schedule. The main purpose of the meetings will be to inform agencies of subsystem features and answer any questions which may arise.

TRANSFER OF EMSC FUNCTIONS....Effective October 1, 1974, accounting and reporting functions previously carried out by EMSC were transferred to OMF. A unit designated the Special Accounting and Report Unit (SARU) was established within the National Finance Center at New Orleans to provide agencies with accounting and reporting services. Responsibility for providing fiscal support services to the agencies affected has been divided among OMF, EMSC, ARS, and REA on an agency-by-agency basis.

Because of problems inherent in the physical relocation of systems operations, an enormous backlog of unpaid invoices has developed. SARU will make a strong effort over the next few weeks to eliminate this backlog. Specific problems which arise in any agency because of the payment backlog should be brought to the attention of Dennis C. Boyd, Director, National Finance Center.

BILLINGS AND COLLECTIONS....The initial implementation of the billing and collection system developed by the NFC will occur on December 8 when processing of transactions for the Grain Division, AMS, begins. Processing for APHIS is scheduled to begin on January 5, 1975. Other agencies will be phased into the system in subsequent months. The system will create all bills and process related remittances for the agencies served.

MODIFICATION OF TIME AND ATTENDANCE REPORTS....A recent ruling made all USDA employees subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act. Use of existing T&A's has caused difficult processing problems in computing payroll payments which now must frequently be processed on an exception basis using manual procedures. Revised T&A's for use throughout the Department have been developed for implementation early in calendar year 1975.

GOVERNMENT TRANSPORTATION REQUESTS....Effective November 1, 1974, the National Finance Center assumed responsibility for the issuance and accountability for revised form SF-1169, U.S. Government Transportation Request (TR), dated January, 1974. Under the new system which has been

installed, the NFC is responsible for the accountability of all of the revised TR's in the Department. Instructions for the new system have been issued to the agencies. Effective January 1, 1975, travelers should not use a TR unless it was issued by the NFC. Instructions covering disposal of old TR stocks are contained in the Federal Property Management Regulations.

PROCUREMENT INFORMATION....The Office of Operations is designing a procurement information reporting system. The purpose of this system is to collect and disseminate statistics on procurement responsive to Congressional, Executive Branch, and agency needs. Installation of the system is expected in fiscal year 1975.

OMB CIRCULAR A-102....After 3 1/2 years in the development stage, GSA is about to issue a Federal Management Circular which will prescribe uniform administrative procedures for grants and other agreements with institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other private non-profit organizations. This Circular (similar to OMB Circular A-102 - now known as FMC 74-7) will impact on several Department programs. Copies of a draft of the proposed Circular have been circulated. This will probably be our last chance for input or changes to the Circular before it is issued.

USDA CALCULATOR SELECTION GUIDELINES....The Office of Operations will issue Calculator selection and management guidelines within the next month. The guidelines should aid procurement officers and users in matching equipment needs to their respective applications.

ENERGY CONSERVATION VISITS....Under the aegis of OMB, FEA, GSA, representatives of the Federal Executive Boards will be visiting representative Government field activities around the nation. The purpose of the visits are (1) to observe energy conservation practices at the various facilities and (2) to exchange ideas on how to implement energy conservation practices used successfully at other facilities. Agriculture field facilities will be visited. Visits will begin in January 1975.

NEW SUPPLY ORDERING SYSTEM....GSA is introducing a new system for obtaining supplies from Federal Supply Schedule Contractors. It is called the Automated Delivery Order System. Under the new system, purchase orders for supply schedule items will be transmitted to GSA FSS Regional offices rather than to a contractor. GSA will complete the purchasing action and bill the agency. USDA National Finance Center will issue procedural instructions for Department agencies. The new system will become effective January 1975, for ordering furniture and industrial tires.

SUNNY SPOT SALES STORE....The "Sunny Spot" Sales Store formally located on the sixth floor of the South Building will open December 2 adjacent to the cafeteria escalator on the first floor. This was an Employees' Welfare and Recreation Association operation prior to the takeover by GSI two and one-half years ago. Rather than reverting to the Employees' Association when the new cafeteria opened, it will now be operated by the blind.

EXECUTIVE DINING ROOM....Construction has started on the third floor Executive Conference Dining Room. Completion will hinge on the delivery of the necessary kitchen equipment--maybe in March. Included will be a dining room for the use of the Secretary, a conference dining area to accommodate 25 persons and a buffet area accommodating 50.

